

## Garamendi talks global warming with local businesspeople

By DAVID RYAN  
*Register Staff Writer*

*Napa Valley Register, Saturday, November 3, 2007*

Lt. Gov. John Garamendi stopped in Napa Friday to warn a group of builders and real estate stakeholders that global warming is a real threat to California and they should do something about it.

Garamendi listed off a few concerns: Polar regions melting. Scientists predicting the Pacific Ocean will rise six inches in the next 10 years. Coal burning is still prevalent in the United States energy industry. All this at a time when the manufacture of concrete is, in Garamendi's eyes, one of the most polluting processes around. The ill effects of all of which Garamendi said could paralyze California's water delivery system and parch the state.

Green construction practices like using recyclable materials could reduce the real estate and construction industry's carbon footprint — or its environmentally harmful side effects, he said.

Garamendi stopped in at the Meritage Resort at Napa to cap a multi-day conference among construction and real estate stakeholders on how to make their industry more environmentally friendly.

Besides 16 years in the California Legislature and a four-year stint as California Insurance Commissioner, a campaign biography from his 2002 bid to become Insurance Commissioner states Garamendi served as President Bill Clinton's Deputy Secretary of the Interior, where he negotiated California water rights, logging compacts and the relationship of the United States to Guam.

Garamendi said during his time with the Clinton administration, he traveled to Antarctica to see the impact of global warming on the continent.

Experiences like those steel Garamendi's resolve to take the environmental message across California, speaking to groups that may or may not want to hear what he has to say. During a question and answer session Friday participants asked him about the need for nuclear power and the need to build a new canal to transport water from the Delta.

Garamendi said the nuclear issue may be in the cards.

"I think we will see a return to nuclear (power)," he said, adding there were significant political issues to surmount, including the long-term storage of spent nuclear fuel. France, he said, had made great strides in the design of nuclear plants and short-term storage options, but no

country had solved the long-term storage issue.

“The political issue is severe and the political issue rests on waste disposal,” he said.

Garamendi took the opportunity to push solar and wind power, saying those technologies could produce “free fuel” in the sense that they wouldn’t pollute.

“People ask me, ‘what about China?’” he said, then went on to say that on a recent visit there, the Chinese told him they wouldn’t make great environmental strides without a leadership example from the United States.

Garamendi said if U.S. consumers demanded their products be made with clean energy, market forces would push the Chinese to go further, just like consumer pressures have pushed Chinese toy manufacturers to take lead out of toys manufactured for U.S. children.

“What if we also said, ‘We want your goods but we want them cleanly produced?’” Garamendi said.

In an interview, Garamendi said those who doubted global warming were misled.

“It’s a big, big concern among the scientific community,” he said.